

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6643

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UNCLAS ATHENS 8943

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TAGS PGOV, GR

SUBJ: PROVISIONAL PRESIDENT TO BE ELECTED BY PARLIAMENT DEC 18

REF ATHENS 8918

1. SUMMARY. PM CARAMANLIS INFORMED PARLIAMENT THAT GOG INTENDS TO ANNOUNCE ITS CANDIDATE FOR PROVISIONAL PRESIDENT DURING DECEMBER 17 SESSION OF PARLIAMENT WITH VOTING TO FOLLOW IMMEDIATELY. AFTER PROTESTS BY OPPOSITION LEADERS OVER SHORT LEAD TIME, PM CONCEDED POSTPONMENT IN VOTE UNTIL DECEMBER 18. SPECULATION ON CANDIDATES CONTINUES TO CENTER ON EX-PRESIDENT OF COUNCIL OF STATE MICHAEL STASSINOPOULOS AND FORMER MINISTER OF CULTURE CONSTANTINE TSATSOS, BOTH DEPUTIES-AT-LARGE. END SUMMARY.

2. PRESIDENT OF PARLIAMENT READ TEXT OF OFFICIAL LETTER FROM PM CARAMANLIS TO PARLIAMENT DURING DECEMBER 16 SESSION WHICH STATED THAT WITH GOVERNMENT'S POLICY STATEMENT NOW APPROVED BY PARLIAMENT NATION SHOULD HAVE "AS SOON AS POSSIBLE STATE ORGANS PROVIDED BY TEMPORARY CONSTITUTION AND OCTOBER 4, 1974 CONSTITUNT ACT" WHICH REGULATES CONDUCT OF PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS, PLEBISCITE, ELECTION OF PRESIDENT OF REPUBLIC, LETTER REQUESTED ELECTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE OF PROVISIONAL PRESIDENT WHICH
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IMMEDIATELY BROUGHT PROTESTS FROM GEORGE MAVROS, CU/NF,

ANDREAS PAPANDROUS PASOK, LEONIDAS KYRKOS KKE. OPPOSITION LEADERS COMPLAINED THAT GOVERNMENT SHOULD PROVIDE NAME OF CANDIDATE FOR POSITION WELL IN ADVANCE OF VOTING TO PERMIT ASSEMBLING INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION OF CANDIDATES QUALIFICATIONS. PM COUNTERED THAT THERE WAS NO SECRECY ABOUT MATTER AND CONCEDED POSTPONEMENT IN VOTING UNTIL DECEMBER 18. CONSTITUTES ACT OF OCTOBER 4, 1974 PROVIDES FOR ELECTION OF PROVISIONAL PRESIDENT BY ABSOLUTE MAJORITY OF PARLIAMENT WHICH POSES NO PROBLEM FOR GOG WITH SUPPORT FROM OVER TWO THIRDS OF PARLIAMENT'S 300 MEMBERS.

3. PUBLIC SPECULATION ON POSSIBLE CANDIDATES CONTINUE TO CENTER ON FORMER PRESIDENT OF STATE COUNCIL MICHAEL STASSINOPOULOS AND EX-MINISTER OF CULTURE AND FORMER UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR CONSTANTINE TSATSOS. VRADYNI REPORTED DECEMBER 17 THAT ACCORDING TO COLLEAGUES CLOSE TO PM TSATSOS IS PREFERRED CANDIDATE AND HIS ELECTION CAN BE CONSIDERED CONFIRMED. BOTH WERE ELECTED DEPUTY ON NEW DEMOCRACY DEPUTY-AT-LARGE SLATE ON NOVEMBER 17 AND ARE MEMBERS OF PRESTIGIOUS ATHENS ACADEMY. WEEKEND PRESS CARRIED REPORT THAT PM ELIMINATED CANDIDACIES OF BANK OF GREECE PRESIDENT X. ZOLOTAS AND MINISTER OF PUBLIC ORDER SOLON GHIKAS. REGULATIONS CONCERNING PROVISIONAL PRESIDENT INCLUDE STIPULATION THAT INCUMBENT MAY HAVE OPTION OF RETURNING TO FORMER POSITION.

4. GOVERNMENT ALSO TABLED IN YESTERDAY'S MEETING OF PARLIAMENT THREE DRAFT RESOLUTIONS DEALING WITH PROCEDURES FOR "FIFTH REVISIONARY PARLIAMENT". RESPONSIBILITIES AND POWERS OF PROVISIONAL PRESIDENT, AND ESTABLISHMENT OF CONSTITUTIONAL COMMITTEE. RESOLUTION ON PROVISIONAL PRESIDENT PROVIDES THAT INCUMBENT WILL EXERCISE DUTIES UNTIL NEW PARLIAMENT APPROVES CONSTITUTION AND PERMANENT PRESIDENT ELECTED. CONSTITUTIONAL COMMITTEE AS PROVIDED BY DRAFT RESOLUTION WOULD CONSIST OF THIRTY-THREE REGULAR AND TEN ALTERNATE DEPUTIES TO BE SELECTED BY PRESIDENT OF PARLIAMENT IN PROPORTION TO PARTY STRENGTH. CONSTITUTIONAL COMMITTEE IS SCHEDULED TO RECEIVE LATER THIS WEEK GOG'S DRAFT CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS WHICH COMMITTEE WILL REVIEW AND

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REPORT OUT WITHIN ONE MONTH.
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